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BILLY AND THE DIRECTING FATES

BY

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Billy and the Directing Fates

A play in two acts

CHARACTERS

BILLY DEWITT.....
JIM CRESWELL.....
RAWLINS, a butler.....

Time—a little after nine o'clock of a recent evening.

The Setting is a room in a fashionable dwelling—the home of Miss Mildred Winston. It is the living-room and adjoins the music-room, in which latter apartment a musical is in progress. Rear Center is a double door opening into the hall. Left 1 is a door leading to the music-room, covered by a portiere hanging straight and heavily to the floor, and up Left across the corner is a fireplace in which are seen burning logs. About R. 2 is a window covered with a lace-curtain. Snow is falling outside and the wind is heard. U. R. is a small table and on it is a lighted lamp shedding subdued rays.

Just Right of Center, so as to give almost a clear view of the rear door, is a table—a living-room table, covered with books, papers, a framed photograph or so, and a vase of flowers. Left of table is a comfortable arm chair and right of table is another, or a rocking chair. There may be other chairs in the room sufficient to give it a comfortable appearance.

Before the curtain rises piano music is heard off left and just before it is finished the curtain slowly goes up and then the music is finished and there is a pattering of applause from the other room, followed by laughter and the hum of conversation. The stage is empty. As it becomes quiet in the other room a knocking is heard at the window R. Dead silence. The knocking is heard again, more insistently, and then a violin solo begins in the adjoining room, and at the same time Rawlins, the butler, enters left from rear, and stands in the doorway and listens.

During the action of the play music is heard in the other room, the selections following one another about as they would at an evening's musical entertainment in a private home. Except where designated they are piano numbers. The selections can not be too long and must be of a popular-classical order. The length of time between each number may vary as desired. The music must at all times not be too loud but sound suppressed as if really in another room. A slight applause follows each number and a barely perceptible murmur of voices.

RAWLINS. [*Goes toward window and listens.*] It must have been the wind. [*He turns back toward door.*]

[*The knocking is again heard, followed by voice.* RAWLINS *stops and turns.*]

JIM [*Outside*]. Rawlins! Rawlins! Is that you?

RAWLINS [*Looking cautiously about and stepping lightly to the window and opening it just a little—the wind blows the curtains*]. Yes. Who's there?

JIM [*With voice more distinct*]. Open the side door. I want to come in.

RAWLINS. Yes—but—

JIM. How long are you going to keep me out here in the snow? It's Mr. Creswell and I want to come in.

RAWLINS. Mr. Creswell? [*Surprised.*] The *front* door is open, sir.

JIM. And the side door isn't, and that's what I want. Be quick!

RAWLINS. Very well, sir. [*He closes window and turns toward rear door.*] This is strange. I wonder what's the matter. [*He exits rear right.*]

[*During this interval nothing is heard except the song of the violin, and then the opening and closing of a door off R. and the noise of feet as if stamping snow from shoes.*]

[RAWLINS *enters from rear R.*]

RAWLINS. Right in here, sir. There's no one here.

[JIM *enters in long overcoat, covering a suit of dark clothes, not evening-clothes, gloves on and hat in hand. He is above medium height.*]

JIM. Are you sure no one will see me?

RAWLINS [*Still mystified*]. Sure, sir. The program has only begun and everybody is in the other room.

JIM. Very well. And if you see anyone coming this way, let me know and let me out. [*Starting to take off gloves.*]

RAWLINS. Shall I take your things, sir?

JIM. No. I may want them suddenly. I'll put them here! [*Pointing to chair near door.*] Rawlins!

RAWLINS. Yes, sir.

JIM. Do you know Mr. DeWitt when you see him? Mr. Billy DeWitt?

RAWLINS. The gentleman I see so often with you? Yes, sir.

JIM. Is he here—yet?

RAWLINS. Yes, sir.

JIM. Did he come alone?

RAWLINS [*Thinking*]. No, sir.

JIM. Do you know with whom?

RAWLINS. No, sir. I don't know her.

JIM. What does she look like?

RAWLINS. I only noticed, sir, that she was dark and slender, and—pardon me, sir—very good-looking.

JIM [*Looking as if he had gained the desired information but was not pleased*]. So you noticed *that*, did you?

RAWLINS. Well—sir—being as—

JIM. That will do. [*Quickly.*] Find him for me and send him here. Tell him who wants him. You needn't come back. And Rawlins!

RAWLINS. Yes, sir.

JIM. Remember what I said about letting no one in here. Tell Mr. DeWitt to hurry. And until I have gone stay nearby where I can call you. I may need you. That's all now. [*Handing him a coin.*]

RAWLINS. Very well, sir—and thank you, sir. [*Crosses up to rear door and exits left.*]

[JIM *finishes taking off his gloves and coat and lays them on the chair. He crosses to the window and looks out and nothing is heard except the violin and the wind. He stands there, thinking, his back to the music-room door. Suddenly the portiere is hurriedly thrust aside and* BILLY enters *briskly. He is of medium stature and in immaculate evening dress. At the sound of his entering,* JIM *turns.*]

BILLY. Hello, Jim! You here? Thought you weren't coming. [*Notices his expression.*] Why, what's the matter?

JIM. I didn't intend to come, but decided later.

BILLY. But your clothes—

JIM. I'm not going in there.

BILLY. What's up? Anything happened at the rooms?

JIM [*Quietly*]. Nothing has happened at home.

BILLY. But I don't understand. [*Pauses, and violin is still heard.*] [*Changing manner.*] Say, old man, you *must* go in. Old Hauffstein isn't doing a thing to that fiddle. The women are all looking as emotional as a romantic matinee, and Mildred—

JIM. Mildred?

BILLY. —like the persecuted heroine in the third act of a melodrama. [*Amused at his carrying out the idea.*]

JIM [*Sharply*]. Don't talk like that, Billy.

BILLY [*Reverting to his former manner*]. But how did you get in?

JIM. Rawlins—side door.

BILLY. Well, if you're running away from anyone, tell me about it. This is past me.

JIM [*Pointing to chair left of table*]. Sit down there —and listen. [*Taking chair R. of table.*] This has got to be settled before I leave, and I may have to clear out any moment. I mustn't be seen, and above all, Mildred must not know that I'm here—or have been here. Understand?

BILLY. If it's as bad as that and there's anything I can do—[*Lighting cigarette*].

JIM. Put that out; they'll smell it in there. [*Then apparently lost in reflection, but in reality lost as to what to say.*]

BILLY [*Extinguishing cigarette*]. If you're going to sit there mooning like a homesick kid, I'm going in.

[*Rising.*] There's music in there and some pretty girls, and that for me. [*Pauses.*] If you'll talk and tell me why you're here, all right—if not—

JIM. Just a minute, Billy.

BILLY [*Sitting*]. Well?

JIM. There's no use in going into details in this. You know about Mildred and—me—know what she's meant to me for over two years. [*Looking away.*] It's done with now.

BILLY [*Quickly*]. Done with?

JIM [*Not noticing*]. But there's one thing I want to be straight on. You'll answer me frankly, Billy?

BILLY [*Not understanding*]. As I can.

JIM. Well, it's this. [*Slowly and pointedly.*] I never knew before, until today—this evening, that there has been anyone else who from the very start might have occupied my place. [BILLY *starts and looks at him closely.*] If I were to ask you, Billy, you, if you knew when we first met Mildred that *you* would have liked to have held that place—[*Pause*] what would you say?

[*He stops and looks* BILLY *earnestly in the face.* BILLY *attempts to return the look—starts as if to speak—and then looks away.*]

JIM [*With force*]. You needn't answer. So you, Billy, my very best friend, have seen me deceiving myself when it has been in your power to put me straight. Why didn't you speak in the beginning? Do you think you were treating me fairly in the matter? Is that what you call friendship if you did it for friendship's sake? And Mildred! Couldn't you have had some pity for her—enough to bring me to my senses? I tell you it wasn't a square deal for her—or me.

BILLY. I hardly know what to say. But you're

wrong. There was a time when I thought I cared for her, but when I saw how much you cared I made up my mind not to, mostly because I wasn't sure of myself in the matter.

JIM. One is always sure in this.

BILLY. If they have your viewpoint. With me it's different.

JIM. But you surely must have noticed her through it all.

BILLY. Only that she was apparently happy with you. She *couldn't* deceive you, or herself for that matter. And conceding that such *is* the case, it's absurd to think that—

JIM. That it is you, Billy? Is it absurd to think that?

BILLY. It's damned rot to think it. [*Changing manner.*] But is that why you're here? I don't see yet. And how do you know?

JIM. From the only source I could know.

BILLY. She told you?

JIM. No, she wrote me. [*Hurriedly.*] Last night I came here to do the thing I'd waited months for—and—I did.

BILLY. You—

JIM. I asked her to—marry me—and—

BILLY. And—?

JIM. She didn't answer. I was mystified, completely taken off my feet. I was sure she would accept me. And then she spoke and I scented disaster in her first tone. She asked me to go, and said she would write in the morning. [*Pause.*] I waited all day and no word came. Then you left and a messenger arrived and I came here

—because I had to see you before it was too late. [*Pause.*]

BILLY. Too late? How?

JIM. I suppose if this were in a story, Billy, it would behoove me to fly at you with a dagger or a challenge, but in life that is only the means of defeating your own ends. There's but one thing to be considered, now. Not my happiness; not yours. But hers. [*Takes letter from pocket and hands it to* BILLY.] Here's the letter. Read it.

[JIM *crosses to door of music-room to see if there is any danger of detection while* BILLY *takes the letter and looks wonderingly at it. He then goes back to his former position while* BILLY *opens the letter rather nervously and then begins to read.*]

BILLY [*Reading*]. "Dear old Jim"—

JIM. That part wasn't necessary.

BILLY [*Continues*]. "If I have done wrong by you, please don't judge me harshly. I couldn't marry you, Jim, in justice to you. If I were to be the only one who suffered ultimately it might be considered, but it wouldn't end right for you. We can't always love those who love us. And in justice to you, Jim, I must tell you why I can't marry you. It's because I love someone else. You remember at the time you entered my life you brought"—[*He stops suddenly.*]

JIM. Go on.

BILLY [*Continuing*], "brought Billy. [*He pauses and looks away.*] And I pray God, Jim, that you understand and help me." [*He folds the letter and without a word hands it back to* JIM.]

JIM. Do you understand now, Billy?

BILLY. Understand what?

JIM [*Quickly to the point*]. Whom did you bring here tonight?

BILLY [*Surprised*]. Why,—Lucy Loring, of course. [*Pauses.*] I never dreamed of this.

JIM. I know that. But in view of this [*Holding up note*], are you going to continue with this—Lucy Loring?

BILLY. That's my business.

JIM [*Strongly*]. But Mildred! There's one thing you've got to do.

BILLY. What? [*Sullenly.*]

JIM [*Changing*]. How far has this gone between you and this—woman?

BILLY. I don't like your tone. I appreciate your position, but the affairs of Miss Loring and me are our own business. [*Decidedly.*]

JIM. You and that—lady are no more suited to one another than—

BILLY. And because *you* think so must I submit to what *you* think is best? [*Rising.*] And when it comes to my own happiness, why can't I be happy with Lucy Loring?

JIM. That's impossible and as soon as you give up this infatuation you'll see it.

BILLY. And I say that it isn't impossible. I'm not to be dragged into anything not to my liking for your sake or Mildred's either. I recognize your desires, but I still insist that I'm *not* going to sacrifice myself simply because *you* think it is up to me to do so.

JIM. Not so loud. They'll hear you.

BILLY. Well, I won't.

JIM. [*Rising*]. All right. Then if I can't lead you I'll drive you. Depend on that. If the circumstances were purely conceptional your words would have some weight, but the real conditions are more than ideal, and you talk like a fool.

[*They stand facing each other across the table and before* BILLY *can speak* RAWLINS *quietly enters, standing in rear door.*]

RAWLINS. I beg pardon, sir, but Miss Loring asked me to find Mr. DeWitt.

BILLY [*Looking defiantly at* JIM *and then speaking calmly to* RAWLINS]. Tell her I'll be there at once.

RAWLINS. Very well, sir. [*Exits rear—to left.*]

BILLY. I've had enough of this. I'm going. [*Crosses L.*]

JIM [*Mopping his face with handkerchief*]. I can't dissuade you, then, in regard to this Lucy Loring?

BILLY. No,—you can't.

JIM. If through any chance—she'd leave the city,—do you think then there'd be a chance for—

BILLY. You're wasting your time. If I had never met her—

JIM [*Quickly coming around table*]. Very well, then. This Loring woman has never existed and we'll work for that chance.

BILLY. Now *you're* the fool. She's in the other room and *I'm* going in. [*Over to door L.*]

JIM. Yes, but won't be for long.

BILLY. What do you mean?

JIM. Just what I say. [*Trying to gain time and his self-control.*] Billy, some people in the weave of our social fabric are the moths that eat holes in it, and it's

often through those very holes that we see things as they should be.

[*There is no reply.* BILLY *is too wrought up to trust himself to speak or to wait longer and he turns, with a tone of disgust, to leave the room.*]

JIM [*Quickly, and just as* BILLY *is about to leave*]. Do you remember Dick Shepherd?

BILLY [*Turning back sharply*]. Dick Shepherd! What's he to do with this?

JIM. He went West, you know, and married while there.

BILLY. Well?

JIM. He had trouble with his wife. You knew that, too?

BILLY. Yes. [*Still sullenly.*]

JIM. And he left her. She said there was another woman, but she only reversed the affair. We know Dick.

BILLY. But what—?

JIM. Just a minute.—Then she and the woman she implicated, who was of her sort, disappeared. Dick kept it out of the papers.

BILLY. Well? I don't see that you—

JIM [*Interrupting*]. Well, this Lucy Loring, Billy, to whom you cling so tenaciously, is—

BILLY. The other woman, I suppose. [*With a tone of not believing him.*]

JIM. No—[*Driving the point at him*]—is Mrs. Shepherd.

BILLY. How do you know? [*Sneeringly.*]

JIM. Dick wrote me. Had her traced here and said to keep her identity unknown unless there was trouble.

BILLY [*His coolness breaking and speaking loudly, crossing C. toward* JIM]. You lie! I don't believe you.

JIM. Billy.

BILLY. I don't believe you, I say. You lie.

JIM. Do you think I'd tell you such a thing unless it were true?

BILLY. I think it is a trap and you're telling it to me to see what I'll do.

JIM. I tell you it's the truth. The letter is at my—

BILLY [*Excitedly interrupting*]. What do you think I am, anyway? You spring a cock and bull story at a convenient time and ask me to conveniently believe it.

JIM. I ask you only to take my word.

BILLY. I'll take nobody's word and neither would you. Humph! [*Disgustedly.*] It's got to be proved before I believe it.

JIM [*Impatiently*]. But I can't prove it now. You must believe me.

BILLY. I don't care to discuss the matter further with you,—or any other matter,—do you understand?

JIM. You mean—

BILLY. I mean that until you retract what you say we can have nothing more in common. Good-night. [*He goes to door of music-room.*]

JIM [*As* BILLY *is about to leave*]. Just a minute. [BILLY *stops, but neither turns nor speaks.*] Will you take a note in there with you?

BILLY [*Without turning*]. To whom?

JIM. To Miss Loring.

BILLY. That depends.

JIM. Wait! [*He goes to back of table quickly and opens drawer and finds a piece of note paper. He sits L. of table and hurriedly writes.*]

[BILLY *turns slowly and angrily and watches him.* JIM *finishes and crosses to* BILLY.]

JIM. Listen. [*Reading.*] "Mrs. Dick Shepherd. Billy hands you this to let you know that we both know who you are. He brought Lucy Loring with him tonight. The car is still at the door. Mrs. Shepherd will go home at once and tomorrow will probably visit friends in another city. James Creswell." There's your proof. Do you think I'd send that in unless I were sure? And what she does after she reads it will show you conclusively whether I am right or wrong. [*Folding up note and handing it toward* BILLY.] I'm going now. I'll meet you at the club tomorrow at lunch.

[BILLY *looks at the paper and then at* JIM, *but doesn't speak nor take the note.*]

JIM. I'm game to send that in there. [*Daringly.*] Are *you* game to take it?

[*Confronted with this phase of the situation, there is nothing for* BILLY *to do but to take it. So he takes the note from* JIM'S *hand and looks at him almost defiantly for a moment.*]

BILLY. I'll take it. [*In a tone as if he were calling a bluff.*] Wait for me here.

JIM. All right.

[BILLY *turns and goes into the music-room with the note.* JIM *steps quickly back from the range of vision through the door as it opens. And as it opens a song is heard to begin—a baritone solo. As* BILLY *closes the door behind him the song sounds softer.* JIM *stands looking intently in the direction of the door, with one hand raised to his face, as the curtain comes slowly down to the music in the next room.*]

ACT TWO.

[*The scene is the same. During the intermission, which must not be too long, the house-lights are not turned on and the foots are left up, holding the interest to the stage while* JIM *is supposed to be waiting.*

During the intermission the baritone solo is heard to continue and then to close, with patter of faint applause from music-room. There is a moment's quiet and then another number begins—a violin solo. After it is fairly started the curtain is slowly raised. JIM *is discovered at the window, looking out at the falling snow, and waiting. He turns his head toward the music-room and listens. Then he crosses down L. quietly and alertly to the door and intently listens again. He stands so a moment and then nervously crosses up stage and in passing back of table he notices a piece of music on it and stops to look at it, picking it up.*]

JIM. Wonder whose this is. [*Turns to front page and notices name.*] Mildred's! She must have left it. [*Opening it, he reads the words he finds, which are German.*]

"Still wie die nacht,
Tief wie das meer,
Soll deine liebe sein."

[*He pauses a moment as if lost in deep reflection and then slowly says the words in English.*]

"Calm as the night,
Deep as the sea,
Should be thy love for me."

[*He repeats the last line slowly and then shows that an idea has occurred to him.*]

JIM. I'll try it. Perhaps it will work. [*Steps quickly to rear door.*] Rawlins! Rawlins! You there? [*Pauses.*] Rawlins! [*He has the music in his hand.*]

RAWLINS. Did you call, sir?

JIM. Miss Mildred's on the program tonight, isn't she?

RAWLINS. Yes, sir.

JIM. How soon?

RAWLINS. Before long, sir.

JIM [*Handing him music*]. Take this to her and hurry. Tell her she is to sing it by request. Understand?

RAWLINS. Perfectly, sir.

JIM. And if she asks who gave it to you tell her you were told not to tell. See?

RAWLINS. Yes, sir.

JIM. Then be quick.

RAWLINS. Yes, sir. [*Exits rear to left.*]

JIM [*Turning*]. I wonder if she will. Perhaps she herself can make him understand.

[*He goes back to the rear door and looks cautiously down the hall, with his back toward audience, and while in that position* BILLY *enters hurriedly from the music-room.*]

BILLY [*At door and apparently cool and deliberate*]. It's a nice mess you've made of this. [*With suppressed excitement.*]

JIM [*Coming toward him*]. Did you give her the note?

BILLY. Yes. [*Forcing himself to keep quiet.*]

JIM. What did she do?

BILLY. Read it, of course.

JIM. What then?

BILLY. I gave it to her.—She was in the door to the hall.—And while she was reading it I went over to the stairs and waited.—When she finished—she came to me —and asked where you were.

JIM. You told her—?

BILLY. I told her you were here. [*Loudly at the end and crossing toward him.*]

JIM [*Coolly*]. Don't get excited. What then?

BILLY. She said—but what difference what she said? I could tell by her face it's not so.

JIM. Where is she?

BILLY. Still in the hall. She says if you won't see her she's coming in anyway.

JIM. Bring her in.

[BILLY *goes back to door L. and* JIM *goes up to door rear and looks down hallway, left, and then speaks sharply and subdued.*]

JIM. Wait! There's Mildred, and she's coming this way. Don't you understand? [*Excited.*] She mustn't see me here.

BILLY. What are you going to do?

JIM [*Quickly*]. Go at once and take her into the other room and then come back.

BILLY. I'll do nothing of the sort.

JIM. Do as I say, if you want me to—

[*A girl's voice is heard in the hall and laughingly she says, "I will in a minute. I left some music in here." The voice is almost at the door and* JIM *draws back toward window.* BILLY *is caught by the excitement and crosses quickly up to rear door.*]

BILLY. You'll be here when I—

JIM [*Excitedly interrupting*]. I'll be here. Hurry!

[BILLY *goes out, turning L., and the girl's laughter stops. After a pause* JIM *gives a breath of relief and goes to rear of table, leaning against it, alternately watching the rear door and the one L., fearing he may yet be caught. After a moment or so* BILLY *comes back through the door from the music-room.*]

JIM [*Quickly*]. Where did Mildred go?

BILLY. She's at the piano. She was coming to get some music she'd left, but Rawlins found her and gave it to her.

JIM [*Relieved*]. Oh!

BILLY [*Returning to his former manner*]. But what about Miss Loring? She's waiting.

JIM. I wonder if it's safe to have her come here.

BILLY. Why not? You're afraid.—You— [*Defiantly.*]

JIM. Don't lose your head. [*Rapidly.*] The people in there think there's no one in here. They've seen you come several times already and if they see her come they'd think there was trouble.

BILLY. An easy way to get out of it!

JIM [*Not noticing and thinking hard*]. Tell her to say to Mildred she's going on the front porch for some air and then to go quietly into the hall and out. I'll go out the side door and around to the front and meet her. [*Pointing from U. R. to D. R. and across the foots to D. L., the supposed direction of the front door.*] Does that suit you?

BILLY. Yes. Where will I stay?

JIM. Here; and wait for me.

BILLY. I'll wait. [*With inference.*]

[JIM *goes up to door rear and picks up his hat in*

passing. He goes out to R. in direction of side door and it is heard to close.]

BILLY. Huh! [*Sneeringly and disgusted.*]

[*He crosses to window and looks out and then to chair R. of table and lighting cigarette he sits down and waits. By this time another number is on in the music-room.*]

[RAWLINS *enters, excited.*]

RAWLINS [*Seeing* JIM *is not there*]. Where's Mr. Creswell, sir?

BILLY. He's gone.

RAWLINS [*Noticing his coat*]. But his coat is—

BILLY. He'll be back presently. What's the matter?

RAWLINS. I must see him personally. I've got to go to the serving room now to prepare the supper and I wanted to see him first.

BILLY. Is there anything I can tell him?

RAWLINS. No, sir. Miss Mildred—

BILLY [*Interrupting*]. What about her?

RAWLINS. She— [*Pauses.*]

[*The side door is heard to close.*]

BILLY. There he is now. I must see him myself first. Go at once.

[RAWLINS *goes reluctantly into hall, turns L.* JIM *enters from hall from opposite direction. He is tired and shows an ordeal has taken place.*]

BILLY. Well?

JIM. Go in there, Billy. [*Pointing L.*] You'll be back in a minute.

[*Without a word* BILLY *goes.* JIM *puts his hat down by his coat and then goes up to rear door, waits a moment and then calls softly.*]

JIM. Rawlins! Rawlins!

[*There is no reply and he goes back to table. He stands there waiting a minute and* RAWLINS *comes in.*]

RAWLINS. I was here a moment ago, sir, to see you, and Mr. DeWitt sent me out.

JIM. Did you hear me call just now?

RAWLINS. No, sir; I was busy in the serving room.

JIM. Well, what is it?

RAWLINS. Miss Mildred, sir— [*Pausing and fumbling for something in his vest pocket.*]

JIM. Miss Mildred? What about her?

RAWLINS. She told me to see you at once, sir,—and— [*Searching in the other vest pocket.*]

JIM. Go on. Mr. DeWitt will be here in a moment and—

[*And at the moment* BILLY *returns from music-room, standing excitedly in the door. A complete change has taken place.*]

BILLY. Jim!

JIM [*Turning toward him*]. Yes?

BILLY. I want to speak to you alone—at once.

JIM. All right. Rawlins, will you go now? Come back as soon as you can.

RAWLINS. Yes, sir. [*Goes out rear to L.*]

JIM. Well, Billy? [*Standing U. C.*]

BILLY. She's gone.

JIM. I thought she would.

BILLY [*Controlling his voice*]. What did you say to her out on the porch?

JIM. The same things I told you here—and a few more facts you wouldn't give me time for.

BILLY. What were they?

JIM. What difference does that make now, Billy? You see she's gone and that's all we were after.

BILLY [*Rubbing his forehead with the back of his fist and looking dazedly out*]. Gone! [*Crosses to chair L. of table and sits.*] Gone! [*Burying his face in one arm on the table.*] Oh—!

[JIM *doesn't move at once, but watches him a moment and then crosses to him, but doesn't touch him.*]

JIM. Come, Billy,—come, old man! [*Pause.*] Tell me what happened.

BILLY [*Holding position a moment and then slowly looking up*]. When I went in I saw Mildred first. It seemed she was waiting for me. I don't know why,—but it *seemed* that way.

JIM. That's strange. [*As if to himself.*]

BILLY. I asked her where—where Lucy was and she said she'd gone upstairs to get her things—that she'd been called home suddenly. [*Quickly.*] Jim, that's what your note said.

JIM. Sure.

BILLY. And then she came down and said "good-night" to Mildred and looked at me a moment—and then went out—without a word—and was gone.

JIM [*Turning away and then quickly back again*]. What did Mildred do?

BILLY. She watched me and saw me come here.

JIM. Well?

BILLY. I can't help it if she did notice it. I had to see you at once. Jim, I've been a fool, as you say, and I ask your—

JIM. You needn't say that, Billy. I understand. What did Mildred do?

BILLY. I think she would have followed me here, but someone came up and spoke to her and she turned back to the piano and picked up a piece of music.

JIM. Billy,—Mrs. Shepherd is gone now. Do you remember what Mildred said in her note—about you, Billy?

BILLY. Yes, Jim.—But I—don't you see—don't you understand—?

[*Just then the piano is heard and* JIM *recognizes the introduction to the song.*]

JIM. Listen, Billy. It's Mildred's song. [*Very earnestly.*] Won't you try, old man?

[*Before* BILLY *can reply* MILDRED'S *voice is heard. Each holds his position, looking straight out, busy with his own thoughts, and listening. About half way through the first verse* JIM *crosses noiselessly back to the window. Billy doesn't notice, as he is looking ahead. At the end of the first verse* JIM *comes down back of* BILLY *and puts his hand on his shoulder.*]

JIM. Billy, when the gates of Heaven are open to you, must St. Peter and his angels come out and kick you in? Must they, Billy? Can't you hear them calling you?

[BILLY *makes no response and turns his head away.* RAWLINS *appears from music-room door, empty tray in hand, quickly entering.*]

JIM. Well? What is it?

RAWLINS. I must speak to you a moment, Mr. Creswell. [*Crossing up stage to rear door,* JIM *following him.*] Miss Mildred asked me to give you this note, sir.

JIM. Miss Mildred? How did she know I was here? [*Quickly.*]

RAWLINS. I don't know, sir; but she said you are to read it at once and give me an answer. I'll be back in a minute, sir.

[JIM *takes the note and* RAWLINS *exits rear to L.* JIM

comes down back of table, opens note and reads it. He looks up quickly, wonderingly and with an eager smile listens to the last notes of the song. The applause at its finish is louder than after the other numbers and MILDRED *begins again the last verse as an encore. Just before the end of it* JIM *speaks.*]

JIM. Billy!

BILLY. Well? [*Starting.*]

JIM. She knew I was here all the time.

BILLY [*Blankly*]. Who?

JIM. Mildred, of course.

BILLY. Oh—How did she know?

JIM. She found on the stairs the note you took to Mrs. Shepherd. Saw my name on it and knew my writing, and, of course, knew it was written here.

[*This brings* BILLY *quickly to his senses.*]

BILLY. What did she do with it?

JIM. She returned it with a note to me. Here it is. Shall I tear it up?

BILLY. Yes.

[JIM *does so, walks over to fireplace and throws the pieces of paper on the blaze. He crosses to back of table again.*]

JIM. And Billy?

BILLY. Yes.

JIM. This song she just finished—I sent in to her to sing for your sake,—so you could understand,—and she says she understood why I did it,—but that she was to sing it anyway,—and that she sang it—just for me—because—

BILLY [*Rising and quickly facing him*]. Jim—I—

JIM. Because—Oh, I can't tell you,—let me read it. [*Reading.*] "Because what you were trying to make

Billy see was not so much for his sake as for the sake of my happiness,—so I think, Jim, after all I would rather trust my happiness to the man who could do as big a thing as that.''

BILLY. Jim!

JIM [*Continuing reading without looking up*]. ''And tell Billy that I've known who Mrs. Shepherd was ever since she came to town.''

[*He looks quickly at* BILLY, *who turns away with a smothered exclamation of almost shame, and covers his face with his hand.*]

JIM [*Quickly*]. Listen, old man. Don't speak until I've finished. [*With an exuberance of tone.*] You know what this means to me. It means,—oh, it means everything. At this minute life holds more than it did in all its preceding years. And I see things somehow just as they should be. [BILLY *is listening.*] And I'm sorry about—about the other,—but don't you see all this was just the hand of Providence showing you,—and Mildred,—and me the right direction? And that hand, Billy, is always pointing that way, only sometimes we don't see it immediately. And give Him time, old man, and he'll show you the right way again, and to the *right* girl. See? [*Brightening his manner.*] Mildred wants me to send a reply by Rawlins as to when I'll see her. Will you go in and tell her for me?

BILLY. Don't ask me, Jim. I'm going home.—I'm very glad for you.

JIM. You're going in there and see her at once. Don't you understand if you face it now how much easier it will be tomorrow in the cold light of day?

BILLY [*After a momentary struggle and gaining his*

composure]. All right. [*Smiling.*] What shall I tell her?

JIM. She suggests some time tomorrow, but tell her that in just two hours, when everybody is gone, I'll be back and will see her *tonight.* [*Slapping him on the shoulder and half-laughing.*] Tonight, Billy. Do you get that?

BILLY [*Crossing to door L. and almost losing his regained self-control, and he turns*]. Jim—I—

JIM [*Seeing his predicament and sobering instantly*]. Go at once, Billy. [*Pointing to door.*]

BILLY [*Holding out his hand toward him*]. Good-night—my friend. [*He turns quickly and abruptly leaves the room.*]

[*As he goes the strains of a brilliant Chopin polonaise are heard from the music-room, beginning the last number.* JIM *goes quickly to get his coat and hat, and as he picks them up* RAWLINS *appears in rear door from L., carrying a tray piled with napkins.*]

RAWLINS. What shall I tell Miss Mildred, sir?

JIM. Tell her that before long her mother is going to be in danger of losing a very good servant.

RAWLINS. Sir? [*Quickly putting tray on table and facing him.*]

JIM. Don't you understand? [*Smiling.*]

RAWLINS [*Starting as he thinks he realizes, and then smiles back*]. I hopes so, sir. But about the note, sir?

JIM. Mr. DeWitt is tending to that, thank you.

RAWLINS. The show's most over in there, sir, and if you want to go before they see you, sir, you'd better hurry.

JIM. Going! Help me with my coat. [RAWLINS

goes to him and does so.] There! Thank you. Is the way clear to the side door, Rawlins?

RAWLINS [*Going to hall and looking out*]. Yes, sir.

JIM. Let me out, then. [*They go toward door.*] And Rawlins, I'll be back about midnight and then I'll come in the *front* door. [*Laughingly.*]

RAWLINS. Very good, sir.

[*They quickly exit toward the side door and in a moment, above the music, the door is heard to close. The stage is quiet a moment, except for the music, and then, just as it finishes and the applause is heard,* RAWLINS *enters rear from R. With a sigh he goes to table and picks up his tray of napkins, and speaks.*]

RAWLINS. Oh, well, it's none of *my* business *any*way.

[*Then a little laughter is heard in the music-room and as the program is over in there the conversation is accordingly more animated and louder, and then to the buzz of it and the laughter, with a blank, inscrutable and "butleresque" expression on his bland countenance, and feeling his importance in the household,* RAWLINS *crosses down to the door L. and quietly and with all the dignity he can command, he passes into the other room. As the door opens the noise sounds louder and as the door closes just the buzz of it is heard again. And after the door has been closed for a second or two the wind is heard outside in dreary contrast to the brightly blazing hearth and the merriment in the atmosphere, and then the curtain slowly is lowered.*

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This play has become one of the most popular in America. The good plot, the strong "heart" interest, and the abundant comedy all combine to make a most excellent drama. "Bub" Barnes is a fine character of the Josh Whitcomb type, and his sister is a worthy companion "bit." Sammy is an excruciatingly funny little darkey. The other characters are good. Fine opportunity for introducing specialties. The play has so many good points that it never fails to be a success.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

BERNICE HALSTEAD, a young lady of eighteen, with an affection of the heart, a love for fun and hatred of arithmetic.....
AMY HALSTEAD, her sister, two years younger, fond of frolic.
INEZ GRAY, a young lady visitor, willing to share in the fun....
MRS. HALSTEAD, a widow, and stepmother of the Halstead girls
HANNAH MARY BARNES, or "Sis," a maiden lady who keeps house for her brother .....
DWIGHT BRADLEY, a fortune hunter and Mrs. Halstead's son by a former marriage.....
DR. BURTON, a young physician.....
SAMMY, the darkey bell-boy in the Halstead house.....
ABRAHAM BARNES, or "Bub," a yankee farmer, still unmarried at forty—a diamond in the rough.....
ATTORNEY; SHERIFF .....

Time of playing, two hours.
Two interior scenes. Modern costumes.

SYNOPSIS OF INCIDENTS

Act. 1. Parlor of the Halstead home. The young doctor. The three girls plot to make his acquaintance. An affection of the heart. "Easy to fool a young doctor," but not so easy after all. The stepmother and her son. The stolen diamonds. The missing will. Plot to win Bernice. "I would not marry Dwight Bradley for all the wealth the world contains." Driven from home.

Act 2. Kitchen of the Barnes' farm house. Bub takes off his boots. The new school ma'am. "Supper's ready." "This is our nephew and he's a doctor." Recognition. A difficult problem in arithmetic. The doctor to the rescue. "I'm just the happiest girl in the world." "I've come to pop the question, an' why don't I do it?" Brother and sister. "If it's a heifer, it's teh be mine." The sheriff. Arrested for stealing the diamonds. "Let me knock yer durned head off." The jewels found in Bernice's trunk.

Act 3. Parlor of the Halstead home. "That was a lucky stroke—hiding those diamonds in her trunk." The schemer's plot miscarries. Abe and Sammy join hands. The lawyer. "Bully for her." Bradley tries to escape. "No, ye don't!" Arrested. "It means, dear, that you are to be persecuted no more." Wedding presents, and a war dance around them. "It is no trick at all to fool a young doctor."

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OR
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Scenery—City street, showing R. R. Station; rocky pass, with set cabins; a wood scene, and two plain interiors. Costumes of the day. Time of playing, two and a half hours.

SYNOPSIS OF EVENTS

ACT I—Entrance to Railroad Station

Looking for a victim—Joe Ruggles—"Them galoots is worse than grizzlies"—"Morning papers"—Madge and Bess plying their trades—"Can't you sing Joe a song?"—Hamilton and his pal confer—Tom Howarth gains inportant information—"Don't you dare to lay hands on us!"—Hamilton tries to maintain his authority—"Who's Old Joe!"

ACT II—Doomsday's Hotel, Dare-devil's Gulch, California

The landlord secures a guest—Hans disappointed—"Dot is a mis-dake"—A ghost story—The "Kid and his sister"—"Did I hurt your highness?"—Hans and Doomsday have another talk—Kate Laurel meets the young miner—"Yah, dot vas vot I t'inks"—Madge's dis-guise penetrated—She recognizes an old enemy—"Now, George Smith, take your choice"—Joe Ruggles as a tramp—"Ef yer think yer can pick on me because I'm han'some ye'll find me ter hum"—Hamilton appears—"Those two youngsters are mine"—The tramp takes a hand.

ACT III—Wood Scene

A lively ghost—Hamilton and Smith plan more villainy—Old Joe thinks of turning Detective—Kate Laurel again—"There is a secret connected with my life"—Kate's confession—"What do you mean, sir?"—Tom Howarth once more—"Vos you looking for a hotel?"—Planning an abduction—Old Joe as an Irishman—"Phat does yez want wid me?"—Undertakes to be a detective—Takes a hand in the abduction—"Do it at your peril."

ACT IV

Hans hears, and tells, the latest news—"I nefer pelieved dot spook peesness"—Kate Laurel astonished—Hamilton attempts flight—"De poys haf got Mr. Hamilton, und dey vill gif him a necktie barty"—Arrest of Smith—"Get out mit my vay, I vas de United States Mail"—Tom meets his old friend under new circum-stances—"Do you want me, Tom?"—Old Joe gives consent—A happy ending.

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CHARACTERS

CAPT. ROBERT RACKET, one of the National Guard. A lawyer when he has nothing else to do, and a liar all the time.....Comedy lead

OBADIAH DAWSON, his uncle, from Japan, "where they make tea".....Comedy old man

TIMOTHY TOLMAN, his friend, who married for money, and is sorry for it.....Juvenile man

MR. DALROY, his father-in-law, jolly old cove.....Eccentric

HOBSON, waiter from the "Cafe Gloriana," who adds to the confusion ..... Utility

CLARICE, the Captain's pretty wife, out for a lark, and up to "anything awful".....Comedy lead

MRS. TOLMAN, a lady with a temper, who finds her Timothy a vexation of spirit.....Old woman

KATY, a mischievous maid.....Soubrette

TOOTSY, the "Kid," Tim's olive branch.....Props.

SYNOPSIS

Act I. Place: Tim's country home on the Hudson near New York. Time: A breezy morning in September. The Captain's fancy takes a flight and trouble begins.

Act II. Place: the same. Time: the next morning. How one yarn requires another. "The greatest liar unhung." Now the trouble increases and the Captain prepares for war.

Act III. Place: the same. Time: Evening of the same day. More misery. A general muddle. "Dance or you'll die." Cornered at last. The Captain owns up. All serene.

Time of playing: Two hours.

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Santiago

OR

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Milton Merry, U. S. N. In love with Bess.....Light Comedy
Lieut. Cristobal, S. A. In love with soldiering.....Straight
Dr. Harrison, Red Cross H. S. In love with surgery.....
.....Straight old man
Elmer Walton, banker. In love with Spanish bonds.....
.....Character old man
Phillip Basset, his stepson. In love with Ysobel.....Juvenile
Fernando Diaz, Walton's cashier, afterwards S. A. In love with Cora ..... Heavy
Beverly Brown, Walton's butler, afterwards Red Cross H. S. In love with chickens.....Negro Comedy
Cornelius Dwyer, Walton's coachman, afterwards U. S. A. In love with "Naygurs".....Irish Comedy
Antonio Carlos, a Cuban planter. In love with Spain.....
.....Character old man
Cora Basset, Walton's stepdaughter. In love with Oscar..Juvenile
Bess Walton, Walton's daughter. In love with Milton.....Ingenue
Ysobel Carlos, Antonio's daughter. In love with Phillip....Juvenile
American Soldiers, American Sailors, Spanish Soldiers, Guerillas.

Actual time of playing, two hours.

SYNOPSIS

ACT I. The ball at Walton's, Washington, D. C. Handsome interior.

ACT II. The Red Cross Hospital. First day's battle of Santiago. Exterior.

ACT III. Scene 1.—Interior Guerilla headquarters in the Sierra Cobra, near Santiago. Scene 2.—Exterior. The underbrush of Sierra Cobra. Scene 3.—Fight in the mountain pass, second day's battle of Santiago. Exterior.

ACT IV. Hotel Tacon, Santiago, on the night of the surrender. Interior.

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